

# Board Establishes Health Agency

By Michael Wilson



## A Message From the Director



The Board of Supervisor's decision to create a Health Agency (see article to the right) will enable the County to offer more integrated services to our residents. As a physician in our system, I know that there are many patients who need mental health services, substance abuse services, and health services. Currently, they would have to go to three different departments; at each they must complete registration and eligibility determination. Our information systems cannot speak to one another so physicians, nurses, pharmacists and other health care professionals cannot determine what medications patients are taking or whether important laboratory tests have been performed. By having the three departments in an agency, we can make it easier for clients to get the services they need and for our providers to have the information they need to provide the best care. Being together as one agency will also help us to tackle population health problems such as sedentary life style and tobacco use. Working together, we can combine patient education at clinical sites with community prevention interventions such as walking paths and groups, and regulations on tobacco sales. To avoid problems that occurred in the past, the Departments will maintain separate budgets. Only the Board of Supervisors will have the authority to appropriate funding. The three departments will also maintain the full scope of their current missions, in addition to a set of agency-wide initiatives, such as reducing and preventing homelessness. I have always believed that the best outcomes happen when you bring different disciplines together, with respect for each. The Departments of Public Health, Mental Health, and Health Services each have unique and important tools for promoting health and wellness throughout Los Angeles County. I look forward to working with all of you to make the Agency a success.

The Board of Supervisors voted to establish a new health agency last month to better integrate services between the Departments of Health Services, Mental Health, and Public Health. A single director will head the new agency, but the three departments will remain independent with separate budgets. The decision came after a process that included the creation of a 200-page feasibility report and over 70 public meetings over six months. Over 100 speakers weighed in on the proposal. Supporters including physicians, psychiatrists and labor leaders heralded the proposal, saying it would break down departmental silos that force clients to shuffle between county agencies for services. A number of detractors including community mental health and public health advocates voiced concerns over the potential for new bureaucracy and erosion of gains made in areas like prevention and community-based mental health services over decades. Dr. Herb Hat-anaka, one of the speakers at the hearing, said more efforts should be taken to reduce disparities in behavioral healthcare to ethnic communities. "One of the problems you've

always had was medical records from various departments get lost or they are not able to be accessed when you're being treated from one department to another," said Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich. "This is an attempt to resolve that. The economies of scale and the purchasing of drugs are going to be done quicker and more economically which allows more resources to provide services for those individuals being served. It's a reform that will enhance treatment and care." Supervisor Hilda Solis voiced similar support, saying agency integration is an effort to continue in the movement to break down county silos. Supervisor Sheila Kuehl said she heard many people voice concerns at the hearing, but few talk about the benefits of integration. "I believe we're all on the same page about wanting to deliver the best possible results in the three different arenas of physical health, mental health and public health. The hope, if we do this, is that we will protect the missions of the three departments." Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas said the impulse driving integration is enhancing quality of services for clients. "This is

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## Harbor-UCLA Takes Cue from Auto Industry

By Michael Wilson



A team at Harbor-UCLA implements Toyota Lean principles in the primary care setting.

What does a Toyota Camry have to do with an eye appointment? A lot, if you're a healthcare administrator doing process improvement. Toyota is well known for manufacturing efficiency. Workers on a Toyota assembly line don't waste time looking for the right seat to install or the right tool. The process of car production has been refined, improved, and refined again so that it's near perfect. Employees are empowered to make process changes and Toyota principles help the company cut inventory and related costs. The result? Fewer Camrys come off the line and quality defects are minimized. That means happier customers and a better bottom line for Toyota.

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FAST FACTS  
From Dr. Katz  
High Quality  
Patient Centered  
Cost-Effective Health Care



# Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Hospital Celebrates Opening



Thousands turned out to celebrate the opening of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Hospital on August 7. County Supervisors were joined by Mayor Eric Garcetti, State Attorney General Kamala Harris, Congresswoman Janice Hahn, hospital leaders, health advocates, and community residents. The privately run, 131 bed state of the art facility houses an emergency room, critical care unit, plus labor and delivery, radiology, and ancillary services. The facility is run by the nonprofit MLK Healthcare Corporation with medical services provided by the University of California. The surrounding campus includes an outpatient center, mental health urgent care facility, inpatient psychiatric facility, and public health center. A recuperative care center is slated to open in October.

### (‘PROCESS’)

The Toyota Production System, or Lean as it is called in healthcare, is now commonly applied to healthcare and other industries. Lean is a bottom up approach to fixing broken systems. The basic premise is simple — focus on value, eliminate waste, respect people and continuously improve. A key Lean principle is to involve the front-line staff in the improvement work. “It is the staff that does the work that best understands how to improve it,” says Susan Black, RNP, MSN, Chief Kaizen (Improvement) Officer at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center. A team from Harbor worked directly with Toyota through a community partnership to learn and apply the principles of Lean. There they have seen the number of new patients the Eye Clinic is able to see increase from an average of four patients to 14 per day. Waiting time for surgery moved from over six months to one month and clinic cycle time dropped by over 50%. Because of these changes, the Eye Clinic is now able to quickly see more new patients and get them the treatment they need in a timely manner. “It’s about empowering teams of folks who work in the process to learn to see their work through new eyes and work together to improve it,” says Black. Dr. Pradeep Prasad, Chief of Ophthalmology at Harbor-UCLA, says a bigger force is at play. “The

changes we made are not just small changes in efficiency here and there. The foundation for all the improvements we have made is a cultural change, a change in how we approach our work.” Harbor is currently working with Toyota to improve primary care. “Improving our daily efficiency is important, but as a patient centered medical home we have to think beyond one moment in time in the clinic. All the extra minutes or hours of time gained from a more streamlined workflow, is time that can be dedicated to managing our empaneled patient population” says Carmen Mendez, MD, Residency Director, Department of Medicine. With pressures under the Affordable Care Act to deliver better care to more individuals more efficiently, Harbor was awarded a four-year, \$750,000 grant from Unihealth to further embed Lean, Harbor’s performance improvement model, into their organization as a strategy to meet the challenges of healthcare reform. “We have a lot of work to do, but we are excited to move forward building a sustainable infrastructure that supports a culture of continuous improvement throughout our organization,” adds Kim McKenzie, Interim CEO. “Our patients deserve it and so does our staff.”

### (‘AGENCY’)

thoughtful, careful, respectful and ultimately will serve the interest of those we claim to be most concerned about.” Supervisor Don Knabe expressed concern over details of the integration, saying he wanted more time to review the agency’s strategic plan. “The devil is in the details,” he said. “And while we’ve had a lot of de-

tails today, we’ve also had a lot of detailed questions and concerns and differences.” The Department of Human Resources was directed to create an ordinance establishing the agency director position in 30 days. The Board asked the Interim CEO to convene the Department Heads to create an operational plan.

# EMS Agency Names Medical Director

Marianne Gausche-Hill, MD, has been appointed medical director of the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Agency. She replaces Dr. William Koenig, who retired. She is responsible for medical policies and procedures that paramedics and EMTs utilize in the field. Gausche-Hill is a graduate of UCLA School of Medicine and has worked at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center since 1989. She has held several positions in the Department of Emergency Medicine including Base Hospital Medical Director, Chief of the Division of Pediatric Emergency Medicine, and Vice Chair, Department of Emergency Medicine. She has also been active with the Paramedic Training Institute and nationally recognized for her work in pediatric emergency medicine.



# 2015 Patient Safety Conference and Awards Ceremony

## Patient Safety Conference & Awards Ceremony

September 24 - 25, 2015 · 7:30am – 4:30pm  
The California Endowment Center for Healthy Communities  
1000 N Alameda St, Los Angeles, CA 90012

### Keynote Speakers

Suzanne Beyea, RN, PhD, FAAN

Ellen Flynn, RN, MBA, JD

Regina Holliday, Founder of the Walking Gallery

Matthew Arthur, London, NG

Patricia Skolnik, BASW

**Don't miss out:**

- Awards Ceremony
- Posters on Display
- Patient Safety Product Vendors
- & More Featured Speakers!

**REGISTRATION CLOSES SEPTEMBER 10th**  
**SAVE YOUR SPOT TODAY!**  
Limited Seating (First Come, First Served Basis)

**Click to Register for Event**

For more information, email: [Patientsafety@dhs.lacounty.gov](mailto:Patientsafety@dhs.lacounty.gov)

The 2015 Patient Safety Conference and Awards Ceremony will be held on September 24 and 25 at the California Endowment Center. Hear nationally noted speakers, see the winners at the awards ceremony, view poster displays, meet product vendors, and talk with DHS featured guests. Save your spot today - registration closes September 10th and seating is limited. Click the image above to register or for more information, visit the [2015 Patient Safety Conference homepage](#).

FAST FACTS

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